

The Watchman and Southron.

THE SUMTER WATCHMAN, Established April, 1850.

"Be Just and Fear not—Let all the ends Thou Aims't at be thy Country's, Thy God's and Truth's."

THE TRUE SOUTHRON, Established June, 1888.

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ALLIES STILL ATTACKING.

SECRETARY OF WAR BAKER DISCOUNTS GERMAN CLAIMS.

Allies are Masters of Situation in The West and Germans are on Defensive as They Have Been for Two Years.

Washington, Dec. 16.—"No element in the military situation should lead us to conclude that the initiative in the West has passed from the allies to the enemy," says Secretary Baker in his weekly review of the military operations, made public tonight, and devoted largely to the German advertising of an impending great offensive.

"During the period of the review the general military situation in the West has remained unchanged," continues the statement which deals with the week ending yesterday. "Rumors of great preparations on the part of the Germans with a view to achieving some major strategic success in the West continue to reach us."

"Reports of massed hostile concentrations in those sectors where the enemy proposes to break through the French front and roll back the allied line on a broad scale are numerous."

"The German higher command seeks peace through victory. The enemy is apparently very eager to have us believe that he is about to win such a victory."

"For the past two years the Germans have been on the defensive in the West. The bold advancing of an imposing offensive on the part of the enemy, which, while in the realm of possibility, and therefore should not be neglected or overlooked, must in nowise be interpreted to mean that the increased strength of the hostile forces will result in any permanent strategic advantage to the Germans."

"Surveying the outlines of the general war strategy on all fronts, we find that both belligerents have been on the offensive during the past six months."

"The central powers have taken the initiative in the Eastern and Italian theaters; the allies along the major front in the West, in Palestine, Mesopotamia and East Africa."

"The enemy has confined his efforts to advancing his lines along the Russian front, resulting in the capture of Riga, and then by a well conducted offensive in Italy with the assistance of an intensive political drive gained a marked strategic success in this section."

"The allies, in the principal theater of operations, the West, have been able to record an almost uninterrupted series of tactical advantages."

"Though the capture of the Holy City can not be held a principal military objective of the campaign so vigorously pursued by General Allenby in this theater, the conquest of Jerusalem will have a wide influence throughout the Turkish empire . . . and will go far toward reaffirming the prestige of the allied powers throughout the Orient."

"Germany realizes the danger attendant upon the waning of her influence in the East and will therefore be more anxious than ever to conclude a speedy peace before the 'war map' becomes less favorable."

"Reports of observers recently out of Germany, who were present during previous air raids in Germany by the allies, state that these raids have had a very depressing effect on the civilian population and have heightened the growing discontent among the German people who now for the first time are being brought face to face with real war conditions."

"The armistice concluded by the Russians with the enemy now includes the entire Eastern front from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Negotiations are not proceeding smoothly. The German demands as reported to us specify, among other points, the immediate opening up of channels of commercial intercourse between Russia and Germany."

PEACE OFFER COMING.

Germany is Preparing to Make Another Proposal.

Washington, Dec. 17.—The information received here among neutral diplomats agrees with intimations from abroad that Germany is considering another peace offer.

THE RAILROAD PROBLEM.

President Will Take No Action Until After Christmas.

Washington, Dec. 17.—It was indicated today that the president will make no further move in the railroad situation until congress reconvenes after the holidays.

SWISS ON GUARD.

INVASION OF FRONTIERS WILL BE REPELLED.

President of Confederation Declares That All Necessary Steps Will be Taken.

Washington, Dec. 15.—In thanking the United States for the declaration to strictly observe the neutrality of Switzerland, the Swiss confederation, in a communication made public today by the state department, declares it will maintain its neutrality by its own forces and repel a violation of its frontiers.

The communication received today by the state department is signed by President Ador of the Swiss confederation and addressed to the charge d'affaires at Berne, in the absence of Minister Stovall, and is as follows:

"December 12.

"Mr. Charge d'affaires.

"In a note of the 3rd inst. you are kind enough to inform the political department that you had been charged by the department of state to inform the federal council that the presence of American troops in Europe taking part in the war against the Imperial German government has led the government of the Union to inform the Swiss confederation that the same is a belligerent in Europe the United States will not fail to observe towards Switzerland the policy of neutral and inviolability of its territory so long as this neutrality is maintained by the confederation and respected by the enemy."

"In the name of the federal council I have the honor, in acknowledging this declaration, to beg you to transmit to your government the thanks of the federal council for this new proof of the sentiments of friendship that the United States has always manifested towards Switzerland."

"The federal council can only renew the declaration of neutrality that it had the honor to notify Washington April 20, 1917, insisting particularly on its firm and unwavering determination to maintain and defend its neutrality and inviolability of its territory of all means at its disposal against any person."

"At the same time the federal council has the honor to declare that by virtue of its sovereignty and in accordance with the declaration of the powers who signed in the treaties of Vienna and Paris of 1815, in particular that of the 20th of November, the Swiss confederation, to whom it appertains to take the step necessary for the defense of its territory, will maintain its neutrality by its forces and will repel a violation of its frontier if that occurs."

"Referring to these acts and to its declaration of neutrality of August 4, 1917, as well as to later declarations especially the notification made at Washington by the Swiss minister on April 30, 1917, the federal council believes that it appertains only to it to decide in what condition it might appear opportune to appeal to the assistance of foreign powers."

"Received, etc. (Signed) "Ador."

MOTOR ROUTE STARTS.

Government to Establish Service Between Cities at Instance of Representative Byrnes.

Washington, Dec. 15.—At the request of Representative Byrnes the postoffice department has agreed to establish motor route service between Augusta and Columbia. The department is establishing this experimental service between cities and they have promised Mr. Byrnes to immediately advertise for bids and will start service some time in January. The route will go by Aiken, Monetta, Batesburg and Lexington.

Mr. Byrnes also requested the department to establish similar service between Augusta and Charleston and the department is now endeavoring to work out a plan whereby this service can be established.

COL. U. R. BROOKS DEAD.

Clerk of South Carolina Supreme Court Twenty-three Years.

Columbia, Dec. 17.—Col. U. R. Brooks, veteran clerk of the State supreme court, died at his home in Shandon early yesterday morning. Col. Brooks was 71 years of age and had been in failing health several months, his condition often during this period being regarded as critical. Funeral services will be held at St. Peter's Catholic Church this afternoon at 3 o'clock, conducted by the Rev. Father Hegarty. Interment will be in the Catholic Cemetery at Elmwood.

REFINER TELLS OF FAMINE.

SPECKELS BLAMES FOOD ADMINISTRATION FOR SHORT-AGE.

Committee Expects Testimony of Other Witnesses Today—Considers Coal Situation Too.

Washington, Dec. 14.—Blame for the sugar shortage in the East was charged to the food administration's fixed import price by Claude A. Speckels, president of the Federal Sugar Refining Company, testifying today before the senate investigating committee. He asserted that raw sugar from Cuba was passing through New York to Canada, where refiners are permitted to pay higher prices.

Mr. Speckels, who said his refinery was closed because of lack of supplies, also charged that Earl A. Babst, president of the American Sugar Refining Company, and George M. Rolph, general manager of the California-Hawaiian Sugar Refining Company, in their positions as agents of the food administration, had been unduly active in getting raw supplies for the American company. Mr. Babst is chairman of the international sugar committee, created by the administration, which fixed the price to be paid for raw sugar coming from outside the United States or its territories at \$6.90 a hundred. Mr. Rolph is head of the food administration's sugar division and a member of the international committee.

When his supply was getting low in October, Mr. Speckels testified, he asked Food Administrator Hoover that he be allowed to pay more than \$6.90 for Cuban sugar. He put in evidence a letter in which Mr. Hoover declined, saying speculators were holding the sugar in Cuba for higher prices and that the American stand and price would be maintained.

Under questioning by Senator Jones of New Mexico the witness said he understood that about half of the 70,000 tons available in Cuba when he wrote the letter had been shipped to other countries and that the balance either had arrived in the United States or was en route. When asked if he did not consider it good business to allow the 35,000 tons to go elsewhere if the Cuban dealers could be convinced that this country would maintain its position, Mr. Speckels replied that the sugar would have served the public when the shortage was acute.

Mr. Speckels told of protesting to Mr. Hoover against the contract whereby the American Sugar Refining Company was to obtain 100,000 tons of the Louisiana crop. He said his company had not considered getting any of that crop because the food administration had fixed no price and that he was astounded to learn of the American company making the contract after a price of \$6.35 for the Louisiana product had been agreed upon at a conference participated in by Mr. Rolph and Mr. Babst.

When the shortage came into sight in the East, the witness asserted, more than 100,000 tons of raw sugar was held in the West, of which the California-Hawaiian Company held 40,000 tons. He said he appealed to Mr. Rolph to allow some of this to come East to keep Eastern refiners going, but was informed it was necessary to keep the supply in the West until the new Hawaiian crop came in.

In support of his charge that Messrs. Rolph and Babst favored the American company, Mr. Speckels reiterated an incident that brought out how two companies operating chain retail stores recently had sugar when none was to be procured at many stores. He said A. H. Lamborn & Company of New York, a sugar broker, contracted for two cargoes of Cuban raw sugar for delivery at New York and offered it to the International Sugar Co. committee in October at \$6.90 a hundred pounds but the committee declined to buy without giving a reason.

Lamborn came to him soon afterward, Mr. Speckels said for means to further finance the deal and told him that within 15 minutes after the committee had declined the sugar a buyer for the American had offered him \$6.65 for it. Buyers for the chain store companies heard of the situation, purchased the sugar for \$7.15, and with the permission of the food administrator, had it refined by the Federal and the Warner Refining Company for \$1.30 a hundred.

The witness said that the retail price of \$7.25 for granulated sugar at seaports works a hardship because, his company manufactures practically nothing but granulated and brown, whereas the American company specializes in granulated, handled in shapes, for which prices are not fixed. Several witnesses have been sum-

COAL BUT FEW CARS.

INADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION RESPONSIBLE FOR SHORT-AGE.

Facilities Adequate for Normal Times Unequal to Present Demands, Says Garfield.

New York, Dec. 14.—"The coal supply of the country is ample, if we could but solve the problem of transportation," Dr. Harry A. Garfield, United States fuel administrator, declared in an address tonight at the annual meeting of the Academy of Political Science. Lack of united action on the part of the railroads, separate administration and divided authority added to the difficulty, he asserted.

"We are supplying more coal to Canada than ever before," Dr. Garfield said, "but in spite of this fact and the further fact that our demand is larger than ever before the supply is ample if we could but solve the problem of transportation."

"When you stop to consider that from 30 to 35 per cent. of the freight carried by the railroads in the past has been coal, you will understand the present situation. The call for other commodities has set coal on the side, so to speak."

"Another difficulty is there is no united action on the part of the roads because of separate terminals, separate administration and divided authority."

"We are not afraid of making mistakes and out of the turmoil will come good order. In spite of the fact that winter is upon us and distress exists, just at a time when the supply of coal is commencing to move, I feel sure we will be able to solve this great question of fuel administration."

motioned by the committee, including A. H. Lamborn, who is expected to testify after Mr. Speckels tomorrow.

The committee also is charged with investigating the coal situation. Senator Reed tonight telegraphed to Governor Cox of Ohio, where the shortage has been acute, that if he had information of value his presence was desired.

HOOVER REPLIES TO REFINER.

Speaks Emphatically of Charges by Speckels.

Washington, Dec. 15.—Charges made by Claus Speckels, president of the Federal Sugar Refining Company, before a senate investigating committee that the food administration is responsible for a sugar shortage drew from Food Administrator Hoover tonight a vigorous attack on Mr. Speckels.

An open intimation is made by Mr. Hoover that Mr. Speckel's testimony was inspired by the fact that the food administration cut profits in sugar transactions.

"It requires no proof from me," said Mr. Hoover, "to establish that Mr. Speckels, a leading sugar refiner, is sore at the food administration and would like to see it discontinued."

"I realize that Mr. Speckels' balance sheet will not look so good next year as last, for refiners' profits have been regulated. Furthermore, his balance sheet would have looked better this year if the price of last August had not been reduced and held fast, in the face of a partial shortage that provided a fair opportunity for 30 cents sugar and much increased profits."

"Mr. Speckels, therefore, has reason to feel badly. There are other citizens who will feel that way no doubt, and no doubt can entertain the public by assaulting the food administration. While many feel badly, still the vast majority of men and women of our business community and of our farmers are sacrificing their profits daily to the nation's necessities without complaint, for many are sacrificing more than their money—their sons."

"We have had two months of partial sugar shortage—October and November—and will also have December before relief from the new crop. The American people have had 500,000 tons of sugar in these two months—that is 70 per cent. of their normal supply in each month, and if cars are available they will have 70 per cent. in December. Owing to car shortages, the shortage has been most acute in the Northwest and about 200 cars are today blocked from that region."

"This 70 per cent. is twice the French ration. In the meantime we have given France a good part of the 30 per cent. and are proud of it. This supply to France was given deliberately and the American people were told of it at the time. We have also agreed to draw 10,000 tons for our friends in Canada. I have yet to

ELECTION IN CANADA.

CONSCRIPTION IS THE ISSUE TO BE DECIDED TODAY.

French of Quebec Opposed to Compulsory Military Service—Borden and Laurier Opposing Leaders.

Ottawa, Dec. 16.—With selective conscription as the great issue the voters of Canada will decide tomorrow whether the new Union government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the veteran leader of the Liberal opposition, shall be restored to power. The campaign, which has just ended, is considered the most important as well as the most bitterly contested in the history of the Dominion.

There are approximately 2,000,000 electors, of whom about 250,000 are soldiers overseas. The military vote already has been cast in camps and trenches in almost every quarter of the world.

Prime Minister Borden and his supporters are standing squarely on the conscription issue and apparently have no fear of the result. They maintain that the soldier vote and that of women relatives of men in the service will be cast almost solidly for them. They have contended in their campaign that defeat for the Union government would be that Canada must drop out of the war for lack of men to keep her fighting forces up to the necessary strength.

Sir Wilfrid, in a vigorous and picturesque campaign, has joined issue with Sir Robert's contention. As an alternative to the compulsory conscription law as it now stands, he has proposed a referendum. If the result of such a referendum were favorable to compulsory service he has pledged himself to abide by the decision of the electors. If the contrary was the result he would revert to voluntary service.

The Liberal leaders have asserted that under their leadership the Province of Quebec, which thus far has offered comparatively few soldiers to the service of the Dominion, would provide more volunteers than could be enlisted by compulsion.

GERMANS DESTROY MERCHANTMEN.

Naval Forces Make Successful Raid on Convoy in North Sea.

London, Dec. 17.—One British, five neutral merchantmen, one British destroyer and four mine sweepers have been sunk in the North Sea by the German naval forces, the result of an attack on a convoy bound from Scotland to Norway, it was officially announced today. The total tonnage lost in merchantmen was eight thousand.

COAL FAMINE BROKEN.

Supply of Fuel Rushed Into New York City.

New York, Dec. 17.—Coal famine here will be broken in a few days, unless the weather conditions interfere, the fuel administrators and railroad officials declared today. Twenty-five thousand tons of coal arrived yesterday and another twenty-five thousand tons are expected today.

London, Dec. 17.—The British war office statement on aerial operations issued at midnight said that during several flights three hostile machines were brought down and two were driven down out of control. None of the British machines is missing.

meet an American citizen who would have had it otherwise.

"As to the food administration stopping the sources of supply: The fact that all available supplies have been brought here that ships and cars could bring; and that it has already been eaten is sufficient answer."

"Mr. Speckels knows the bitterness of ten years fight between producers and refiners; between different refiners and if he looks back over the last three months he will observe a desire of many of these elements to use the food administration as a club to settle their long standing bitterness."

"If Speckels will tell us where there is any sugar today that ships can be obtained to carry or cars can be obtained to deliver, it will be distributed at once with the same resolution that we have requisitioned or distributed over 60,000,000 pounds of embargoed sugar since October 1. In the meantime the 900,000 tons of sugar in Java is as remote as cheese out of the moon—unless we wish to take bread ships from our own soldiers and the allies to provide ourselves with candy."

"LIGHTLESS NIGHTS" ORDERED.

State Fuel Administrator Gets New Instructions From the National Body.

Anderson, Dec. 16.—State Fuel Administrator Gossett is advised by the National Fuel Association of the revocation of the order issued some time ago regulating the burning of white ways, streets, etc. A new order is issued by the national administration, and reads as follows:

"Effective Dec. 15, all signs of every kind, including merchants' signs, theatre signs, also display lighting of buildings and elsewhere, hotel signs and advertising signs, are discontinued completely on Thursday and Sunday nights of each week. On these same nights stores not open for business must not show inside lights more than are necessary for safety, and municipalities with cluster lights or extra bright lighting for white way effect must reduce on Thursday and Sunday nights to only so much lighting as is necessary for safety. The nights will be called 'lightless night'."

Local newspapers are asked to urge households to observe these nights with as few lights in homes as possible. Please understand spirit of order is that on Thursday and Sunday nights there should be no more outdoor lighting than is absolutely necessary for safety of streets, passages and dangerous spots, and that your State administrator is charged by the national fuel administration with giving full effect to this order, using full authority granted you by the fuel administrator to enforce same if there are individual violators."

Administrator Gossett states this refers to lights from hydro-electric plants as well as from coal-using plants.

RUSH OF RECRUITS.

Thousands Seek Service in Regular Army.

Washington, Dec. 14.—Recruiting machinery of the American army showed signs of breaking down tonight under the enormous strain put upon it by the thousands of men who have offered for enlistment within the past few days. In some cases recruiting offices have found themselves, without means of accommodating recruits and have been forced to discharge them and close their offices until the men already in their charge can be distributed.

This means that many men of draft age will fail in their effort to enlist before noon tomorrow, after which time they may join the regulars only in their status as members of the National Army. Protests against turning the men away have come, one from New Rochelle, N. Y., but war department officials said tonight nothing could be done about it, as it was impossible for the recruiting stations to handle the flood of applications.

It was pointed out that registered men who do not get into the regular army through the recruiting stations may do so after noon tomorrow by volunteering through their local boards. Their applications will be acted upon immediately, but they will appear on the rolls as members of the National Army.

The recruiting list made public today shows a total of 14,291 men accepted since yesterday. Indications are that even a greater number applied today.

To care for those accepted during the rush, it has been necessary to send many to National Guard or to National Army camps for temporary housing.

The navy has been limiting recruiting for many weeks to a fixed daily average for all stations. Men in excess of that number who are accepted are sent back to their homes subject to call.

SENATE ARMS INQUIRY.

Committee Resumes Investigations in Open Session.

Washington, Dec. 17.—Inquiry into the alleged delays in supplying arms, and the curtailment of funds recommended by ordinance bureau for purpose was taken up again in open session by senate military committee, after two days' examination of Major General Crosier, chief of ordnance, behind closed doors.

BRITISH IN ITALY.

Germans Report Unsuccessful Attack on Northern Front.

Berlin, Dec. 17.—British troops on the Italian front yesterday attacked the Teutonic lines south of Monte Fontana, but were repulsed, the war office announced today.